

Michigan School Nurse Primer

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE AND CHILD MALTREATMENT

INTRODUCTION

School nurses play an important role in the recognition and reporting of child maltreatment. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) (n.d.), child maltreatment is a serious public health problem with extensive short and long-term health consequences. In addition to the immediate effects of maltreatment, children who have experienced maltreatment are at increased risk of adverse health outcomes and risky health behaviors later in life. Child maltreatment has been linked to higher rates of alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, smoking, multiple sexual partners, suicide, and chronic disease (CDC, n.d.).

Michigan Laws/Regulations:

§722.623	Requires that certain mandated reporters must report child maltreatment signs or suspicions to Child Protective Services. Mandatory reporters include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physicians, physician assistants, dentists, dental hygienists, medical examiners, nurses, and persons licensed to provide emergency medical care, or audiologists• School administrators, counselors, or teachers• Regulated child care providers• Psychologists, marriage and family therapists, licensed professional counselors, and social workers• Persons employed in a professional capacity in any office of the friend of the court• Law enforcement officers• Members of the clergy• Department employees, including eligibility specialists, family independence managers, family independence specialists, social services specialists, social work specialists, social work specialist managers, or welfare services specialists
§722.624	Any other person, including a child, who has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, may report.
§722.625	The identity of a reporting person is confidential and subject to disclosure only with the consent of that person or by judicial process. The identity of the reporter is protected in any release of information to the subject of the report.
§722.633	A person who is required by this act to report an instance of suspected child abuse or neglect and who knowingly fails to do so is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 93 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00, or both.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL NURSE

School nurses interact with children on a daily basis, therefore must be familiar with Michigan's child maltreatment reporting laws. The role of the school nurse is to report suspicion of abuse and allow Child Protective Services (CPS) to investigate. It is a legal requirement to report child maltreatment, as well as taking appropriate action regarding instances of behavior that could endanger the best interests of children. According to the American Nurses Association and National Association of School Nurses (2011), these are within the scope and standard of practice of school nurses.

SCHOOL NURSE RESPONSIBILITY (NASN, 2012)

- Identify students with indicators of maltreatment
- Be aware of the school, district and state process for reporting
- Support the victims of child maltreatment
- Educate staff regarding signs and symptoms of child maltreatment
- Provide safety education to children
- Provide community resources to victims and families
- Collaborate with community to raise awareness to reduce incidence

REFERENCES

American Nurses Association & National Association of School Nurses. (2011). *School nursing: Scope and standards of practice* (2nd ed.). Silver Spring MD: Nursesbooks.org.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Child maltreatment prevention*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/index.html>

National Association of School Nurses. (2012). Position statement: *Child maltreatment: The role of the school nurse*. Retrieved from <http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNIssueBriefsFullView/tabid/445/ArticleId/216/Child-Maltreatment-The-Role-of-the-School-Nurse-Adopted-January-2012>

RESOURCES

[School Personnel Guide for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect](#)
MSU Chance at Childhood Program, <http://chanceatchildhood.msu.edu>

Contributions to the development of this document were made by Tammy Scott-Barney (2013), Oakland University.
